



Reduced death rates from cyclones in Bangladesh: What more needs to be done?

Author(s): Haque U, Hashizume M, Kolivras KN, Overgaard HJ, Das B, Yamamoto T
Year: 2012
Journal: Bulletin of The World Health Organization. 90 (2): 150-156

Abstract:

Tropical storms, such as cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons, present major threats to coastal communities. Around two million people worldwide have died and millions have been injured over the past two centuries as a result of tropical storms. Bangladesh is especially vulnerable to tropical cyclones, with around 718 000 deaths from them in the past 50 years. However, cyclone-related mortality in Bangladesh has declined by more than 100-fold over the past 40 years, from 500 000 deaths in 1970 to 4234 in 2007. The main factors responsible for these reduced fatalities and injuries are improved defensive measures, including early warning systems, cyclone shelters, evacuation plans, coastal embankments, reforestation schemes and increased awareness and communication. Although warning systems have been improved, evacuation before a cyclone remains a challenge, with major problems caused by illiteracy, lack of awareness and poor communication. Despite the potential risks of climate change and tropical storms, little empirical knowledge exists on how to develop effective strategies to reduce or mitigate the effects of cyclones. This paper summarizes the most recent data and outlines the strategy adopted in Bangladesh. It offers guidance on how similar strategies can be adopted by other countries vulnerable to tropical storms. Further research is needed to enable countries to limit the risks that cyclones present to public health.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2471/blt.11.088302>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Early Warning System:

resource focus on systems used to warn populations of high temperatures, extreme weather, or other elements of climate change to prevent harm to health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

A focus of content

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Hurricanes/Cyclones

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Asia

Asian Region/Country: Other Asian Country

Other Asian Country: Bangladesh

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Injury

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Timescale:

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content